

Collaborative Business Forum focused on Corporate Accessibility

The Mayor's Commission on Disabilities and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development joined Baltimore area business leaders on Friday April 20th 2007 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm at The Eastside Career Center in a Business Forum entitled "Making the Case for Accessibility in the Corporate Environment" to spotlight the need for key decision makers to adjust the workplace in order to secure and maintain a diverse and qualified workforce-which includes candidates with disabilities.

Forum presenters included four top executives from global-based corporations who shared their insight, from a return on investment standpoint, into the importance of hiring and accommodating people with disabilities. Presenters included:

K Anne-Rivers Forcke, Worldwide public sector marketing manager; IBM Human Ability and Accessibility Center.
Katherine McCary, Vice President of Human Resources, SunTrust Bank: Disability Resource Center and President of U.S. Business Leadership Network
Merry Korn, CEO and Mike Testa, CIO; Pearl Interactive
Nicole Dechirico, Vocational Specialist; Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

Overall, presenters stressed that with imminent workforce deficits ranging in the millions there is a strong need to recruit, hire and accommodate people with disabilities as one out of every five Americans has a disability, nearly half are of an employable age and only 1/3 are employed.

The event was well attended with 50 different businesses and organizations represented including 15 of the top 20 largest employers in Baltimore.